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## Founding of the Christian Church, 30-100 A. D.

IN FIFTY STUDIES.

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### STUDY VI.

## SEC. 5. RENEWED HOSTILITY OF THE JEWS TOWARD THE CHRISTIANS.

### Acts 3:1-4:31.

30-31 A. D.

JERUSALEM.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—(1) Cambridge Bible on Acts, pp. 31-50. (2) Gloag's Comty. on Acts, I: 120-161. (3) Meyer's Comty. on Acts, pp. 75-98. (4) Expositor's Bible on Acts, I: 148-192. (5) Bible Dictionary, arts. High Priest, Sadducees, Sanhedrin, Temple. (6) Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church, I: 41-46. (7) *Vaughan's Church of the First Days*, pp. 61-101. (8) *Peloubet's Notes*, 1892, in *loc.* (9) *S. S. Times*, Jan. 13, 20, 27, Feb. 3, 1883.

#### FIRST STEP: FACTS.

1. Whether the verse synopses are or are not printed here, the student is expected always to work them out carefully for himself. Make them as concise as possible, avoiding minor details of the narrative. The paragraph divisions of the material of the Section, with their respective headings, are as follows:

PAR. 1. *Vv.* 1-11, THE CRIPPLE HEALED AT THE TEMPLE GATE.

PAR. 2. *Vv.* 12-26, PETER'S CONSEQUENT DISCOURSE IN THE TEMPLE.

PAR. 3. *Vv.* 4:1-4, ARREST OF PETER AND JOHN.

PAR. 4. *Vv.* 5-12, TRIAL BEFORE THE SANHEDRIN.

PAR. 5. *Vv.* 13-22, UNWILLING RELEASE OF THE PRISONERS.

PAR. 6. *Vv.* 23-31, THANKSGIVING AND PRAYER OF THE DISCIPLES.

2. Let the student paraphrase: (1) Peter's Discourse (3:12-26), (2) The Prayer of the Church (4:24-30), endeavoring in each case to reproduce exactly the thought and the spirit, in original, concise, forceful language. Neander's paraphrase (see reference above) may prove suggestive. *These two paraphrases, properly worked out, will constitute their portion of the transcription of the entire Section, to be copied into its respective note-book.*

#### SECOND STEP: EXPLANATIONS.

PAR. 1. *v.* 1, (a) what connection with Acts 2:43? (b) whither were Peter and John going, and why? (c) *what were the Jewish hours of prayer, cf. Psa. 55:17; Dan. 6:10; Acts 2:15; 10:9?* *v.* 2, (a) how long a cripple, cf. Acts 4:22? (b) "they laid daily"—what custom referred to, cf. Mk. 10:46; (Study VI.)

Lk. 16:20? (c) "they"—who? (d) *what was the "door . . . Beautiful?"* v. 3, (a) were the apostles recognized by the cripple? (b) *sacred duty of alms-giving, cf. Deut. 14:28f; 15:7, 11; 26:12f.* v. 4, "fastening his eyes upon him"—meaning, cf. Acts 3:12; 14:9? v. 5, *what did the man expect to receive?* v. 6, (a) compare AV and RV. (b) Peter as spokesman. (c) *had the apostles actually no money?* (d) "in the name of Jesus"—meaning? vv. 7f, (a) graphic description of the cure. (b) *is it that of the physician Luke?* vv. 9f, (a) witnesses to the miracle, cf. Acts 4:16? (b) meaning of "took knowledge"—compare AV, cf. Acts 4:13. v. 11, (a) "held Peter"—how and why, cf. Mk. 5:18? (b) "ran together unto them"—why?

PAR. 2. v. 12, (a) "saw it"—what? (b) "by our own power or godliness"—meaning? v. 13, (a) "God of Abraham"—cf. Ex. 3:6. (b) "glorified"—how? (c) "servant"—*why preferred to "son" (AV), cf. Isa. 42:1; Matt. 12:18; Acts 4:27, 30?* (d) "delivered up"—cf. Jno. 18:30. (e) "denied"—cf. Matt. 27:25; Jno. 19:15. (f) "Pilate determined to release"—cf. Matt. 27:24; Jno. 19:4. v. 14, (a) "holy and righteous"—*find parallel O. T. term for Messiah.* (b) "asked for a murderer"—cf. Jno. 18:40. v. 15, (a) "whereof"—notice marg. rdg. (b) "Prince of Life"—cf. Jno. 1:4; 5:26; 10:28; 1 Cor. 15:20. v. 16, (a) "by faith"—notice marg. rdg. (b) *whose faith—the cripple's or the apostles'?* (c) "faith in his name"—meaning? (d) "hath his name made"—*explain the Jewish metonymy, cf. Acts 4:12; Psalms 106:8; et al.* (e) "the faith . . . through him"—meaning? v. 17, (a) why call them "brethren"? (b) "woe"—*why not modernized by Revisers?* v. 18, (a) *find O. T. and N. T. passages which speak of the suffering of the Messiah.* (b) "thus fulfilled"—how? v. 19, (a) "turn again"—compare AV, and state the significance of the change. (b) what "sins"? (c) "seasons of refreshing"—to what is the reference? v. 20, "send the Christ"—second advent? v. 21, (a) *in what sense is Christ in heaven now?* (b) "times of restoration"—cf. Isa. 1:25ff; Matt. 17:11; Acts 1:6; Rom. 8:22f; 1 Cor. 15:19sq. v. 22, (a) compare closely Deut. 18:15-19. (b) meaning of "like unto me"? (c) *reference to an individual Messiah, or to a line of prophets?* v. 24, "these days"—what days, cf. Isa. 25:1, 6; 26:1, 19; Ezek. 37:1-14; Lk. 1:68-75. v. 25, (a) "sons"—in what sense? (b) "covenant"—*its significance?* v. 26, (a) "unto you"—whom? (b) "first"—why? (c) meaning of "raised up"—cf. Acts 3:22? (d) "blessing"—cf. Tit. 2:11-14.

PAR. 3. v. 4:1, (a) what three classes of enemies named here? (b) what particular reason for hostility had each? (c) what were the duties of the "captain of the temple," cf. 1 Chron. 9:11; et al? (d) "came upon them"—cf. Acts 23:8; Matt. 22:23; 23:6ff. v. 2, exact ground of complaint? v. 3, "put in ward"—why? v. 4, (a) "but"—connection? (b) "word"—what? (c) increase since Pentecost, cf. Acts 2:41?

PAR. 4. v. 5, (a) three classes of Sanhedrists—describe each. (b) were a portion from outside the city? v. 6, (a) "Annas . . . Caiaphas"—explain the difficulty, cf. Lk. 3:2; Jno. 11:49; 18:13. (b) *anything known about "John and Alexander"?* (c) "kindred of the high priest"—of what party? v. 7, (a) "by what power"—inherent? (b) "in what name"—derived power?

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(c) cf. Matt. 21:23; Acts 3:6. v. 8, *why does Peter acknowledge the rulership of the Sanhedrin?* v. 9, "made whole"—notice marg. rdg. v. 10, "in him"—meaning? v. 11, (a) "stone . . . head of corner"—cf. Psal. 118:22; Isa. 28:16. (b) *to whom does this originally refer?* (c) application to this occasion? (d) Jesus' use of the figure: Matt. 21:42. (e) apostolic use: 1 Cor. 3:11; Eph. 2:20; 1 Pet. 2:4-8. v. 12, (a) "neither . . . any other name"—cf. Jno. 3:18; 14:6; 1 Cor. 3:11; Gal. 1:8f; Phil. 2:9ff; Heb. 2:3. (b) the exact meaning of this doctrine? (c) "must be saved"—put into clear language.

PAR. 5. v. 13, (a) "took knowledge"—cf. Acts 3:10. (b) does this imply more than mere physiognomic recognition? (c) "been with Jesus"—among his followers, cf. Jno. 18:15. v. 14, *was the healed man present as a spectator, witness, or fellow-prisoner?* v. 15, "they," "them"—who? v. 16, "cannot deny it"—cf. Acts 3:9, 11. v. 17, (a) "it spread"—what? (b) "threaten"—meaning? (c) meaning of "speak . . . in this name"? v. 18, "speak . . . teach"—what difference between them? v. 19, (a) cf. Matt. 22:21. (b) "judge ye"—*what would be their judgment in this instance?* v. 20, (a) "cannot but speak"—what kind of inability? (b) "things . . . saw and heard"—when and what? v. 21, (a) why did they wish to punish them? (b) "glorified"—meaning? v. 22, "miracle . . . wrought,"—compare marg. rdg. and AV.

PAR. 6. v. 23, (a) "their own company"—who and where? (b) why make this report, cf. Acts 16:25? (c) *was it probably the basis of this account in Acts?* v. 24, (a) "lifted up their voice"—a Hebraism? (b) *who made the prayer?* (c) *was it a set prayer which all repeated?* (d) ascription, cf. Psal. 146:6. vv. 25f, (a) *meaning of "by the Holy Ghost" in this connection?* (b) compare carefully Psal. 2:1f. (c) *state the original meaning, reference and significance of this passage.* (d) "imagine"—notice marg. rdg. (e) "vain things"—what were they? vv. 27f, observe the situation of the Christian Church now as parallel to that of the Theocratic Church in David's time. v. 29, (a) "look . . . threatenings"—that they may not be realized? (b) "boldness"—cf. Lk. 21:15; Acts 4:13. v. 30, "stretchest . . . heal"—miraculous cures to corroborate the truth spoken? v. 31, (a) "shaken"—why? (b) compare Acts 16:26.

### THIRD STEP: TOPICS.

**1. Significance of this Miracle.** (1) how soon after Pentecost? (2) *was it the first apostolic miracle, cf. Acts 2:43?* (3) relate the incident in detail. (4) compare with it carefully Acts 14:8-18. (5) what was the spiritual condition of the cripple before, and what after, his cure? (6) *is there any mention of the cripple's faith, or is it all Peter's?* (7) *was the man healed for his own sake, or as a spectacular testimony to the work and teaching of the apostles?* (8) consider reasons for recording this miracle at such length: (a) it was the occasion of Peter's powerful preaching to a Jewish multitude; (b) it precipitated the first persecution of the Christian Church as such; (c) it brought about Peter's testimony before the Sanhedrin; (d) it directed the attention toward the Gospel; (e) it was a divine testimony to the church; (f) it was a notable work of mercy; (g) give others, and state which reasons seem to you the most important.

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**2. Peter's Public Discourse.** (1) describe the circumstances under which the discourse was given. (2) recall Christ's discourse here a little time before, cf. Jno. 10:22f. (3) *how had the intervening time since Pentecost been spent—had the activity of the Church been within its own limits; if so, how and why?* (4) state the line of thought and the points of truth presented by Peter in this discourse. (5) what advantage in showing the miracle to have been wrought by the God of the Hebrews? (6) *discuss the doctrine of the continuity of revelation, as set forth here.* (7) account for Peter's charge of guilt upon the people for Jesus' death. (8) *discuss Peter's use of the two O. T. passages.* (9) *what was the idea of Peter and the Church as to the time and the condition of Christ's second coming?* (10) *have we here all of Peter's discourse, or only an epitome?* (11) state the practical aim of the discourse, and how attained. (12) name the chief characteristics of the discourse.

**3. Apportionment of Responsibility for the Crucifixion of Christ.** (1) *is there a five-fold division of the responsibility: (a) the Jewish people, cf. Acts 2:23; 3:13f. (b) Pilate, cf. Acts 3:13. (c) the Sanhedrin, cf. Acts 4:10; 5:30. (d) an ignorance on the part of the Jews as to what they were really doing, cf. Acts 3:17; 13:27; Lk. 23:34; 1 Cor. 2:8; 1 Tim. 1:13. (e) the determinate foreknowledge of God, cf. Acts 2:23; 3:18; 4:28; Lk. 22:22.* (2) judge, as wisely as you can, the amount to be charged to each. (3) *what degree of guilt attached to the Jews for their ignorance: (a) previous to the crucifixion; (b) afterward, in the light of the resurrection, the Pentecostal outpouring, and the Christian Church.* (4) *just what is to be understood by Peter's statement that "Christ was delivered up by the determinate counsel and foreknowledge of God" (Acts 2:23)?* (5) *why did Peter put so much emphasis upon the doctrine that God's eternal plan was not thwarted by the Jewish execution of Jesus, cf. 1 Cor. 1:23.* (6) state briefly, but exactly, what you understand to have been the reasons for and the significance of Jesus' crucifixion.

**4. The Trial and the Decision.** (1) why had there been no persecution since the crucifixion until this time? (2) how had the Church been progressing meanwhile? (3) state the way in which this persecution arose. (4) who were the prime movers, cf. Acts 4:1? (5) why were the Pharisees not among them? (6) what particular motive had the Sadducees for their opposition? (6) *observe carefully, and explain, the fact that the bitterest enemies of Jesus were the Pharisees, while of the apostles they were the Sadducees.* (7) what does the full, formal meeting of the Sanhedrin indicate concerning the nature of this trial? (8) *describe the customary mode of proceeding in a trial before the Sanhedrin.* (9) state the charge entered against the apostles. (10) explain the temper and wish of the Sanhedrin. (11) what barrier was interposed, cf. Acts 4:21; Lk. 20:6, 11? (12) consider Peter's defense: (a) *make a paraphrase of it;* (b) note the points made and the teaching about Christ; (c) the evident inspiration; (d) the moral courage; (e) the effect of the defense. (13) state the decision of the Sanhedrin. (14) *were these the same men who had condemned Christ to death?* (15) give reasons for their present leniency: (a) indisposition to violence; (b) did not dare to persecute as formerly; (c) leanings of some of them toward Christianity; (d) did not think persecution necessary. (16) *compare this judgment against the Christian Church with the condemnation of Christ, as regards the degree of guilt involved on the part of the Sanhedrin.*

**5. Peter and John, Leading Apostles.** (1) their companionship, cf. Mk. 6:7; Lk. 22:8; Jno. 1:41; 18:16; 20:6; Acts 8:14; Gal. 2:9. (2) their complementary traits. (3) advantages of the "two by two" method, cf. Mk. 6:7. (4) *is it to be supposed that John was always silent, Peter making the speeches, or only that John's words are not recorded?* (5) characterize and explain the conduct of these men in this event. (6) meaning of "unlearned and ignorant" as applied to them, cf. Jno. 7:15. (7) what do the discourses of Peter and the writings of John indicate as to their education and training? (8) *compare the attitude of Peter and John before the Sanhedrin (Acts 4:10f) with that of Luther before the Diet of Worms, and formulate the eternal principle involved.*

**6. The Prayer of the Church.** (1) state the facts which made this an important crisis for the infant Church? (2) was the outcome a virtual triumph for the Church against the Sanhedrin? (3) observe the elements in this prayer: (a) ascription to God (vv. 24); (b) recalling the prophecy (vv. 25f); (c) description of the situation (vv. 27f); (d) appeal to God for protection, courage, assistance, testimony (vv. 29f). (4) *why was the prayer made to God instead of to Christ (v. 24)?* (5) how did the Christians feel concerning the situation of their Church? (6) *what was the manner of this prayer—was it: (a) a stated prayer or chant of the Church, already familiar, which the Christians now repeated (see Meyer in loc.); or (b) a prayer made on the occasion by one of their number, in the spirit of which all joined?* (7) how was the prayer answered?

#### FOURTH STEP: OBSERVATIONS.

1. The impulsive, practical Peter, and the contemplative, idealistic John, became most useful co-workers for Christ.

2. The apostles, besides being Christians, were faithful to their religious duties as Jews.

3. Miracles were worked by the apostles, but only and confessedly in the name and by the power of Jesus.

4. It would seem that even the apostles had no more money than was necessary for their plainest needs.

5. It was the God of Israel that had been manifested in and was working through Christ.

6. The belief of the first Christians was that the Gentiles, to share in the Kingdom of Heaven, would have to become members of the Jewish theocracy; also, that when the Jews as a nation would acknowledge Christ to be their Messiah, then Christ would return in glory.

7. Peter charged the Jews with the murder of Jesus, proclaimed the full truth about Him, and summoned all to repentance, assuring them of ready forgiveness.

8. The first persecutors of the Christian Church were Sadducees, who objected to the resurrection doctrine, and the priests and temple officials, who objected to the disturbances which the work of the apostles caused.

9. The membership of the Church increased from three thousand to five thousand in probably much less than a year.

10. The favor of the people for the Christians prevented the Sanhedrin from measures of violence.

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11. The Christians were closely united in heart and life, and were full of confidence, courage and thanksgiving.

12. The grace, inspiration and assistance needed by the Church were constantly given by God.

#### FIFTH STEP: SUMMARY.

1. State in a very few words the contents of this Section, showing its unity, and including all the main points, while excluding all the minor ones.
2. Gather and classify all information the Section contains concerning :
  - (1) relation of the early Christians to the Judaic worship.
  - (2) apostolic miracle-working.
  - (3) attitude of the common people toward the Gospel and the Church.
  - (4) teaching of the apostles, respecting especially : (a) responsibility for the death of Jesus ; (b) the truth concerning Him ; (c) duty of unbelievers and persecutors ; (d) blessings which would follow a general acceptance of Christ.
  - (5) apostolic understanding and use of O. T. prophecy.
  - (6) different elements which united in the first persecution of the Christian Church, and the respective causes of their opposition.
  - (7) numerical and religious growth of the Church.
  - (8) first trial of the apostles : (a) the proceedings ; (b) position assumed by the apostles before their persecutors ; (c) official injunction against their work, and its rejection ; (d) leniency of the Sanhedrin, and causes therefor.
  - (9) internal life of the Church : (a) their unity ; (b) their character under trial ; (c) their prayers ; (d) manifestations of God's providence for them.
3. Review carefully the Summaries of Secs. 3 and 4, observing topically the relation of their material to the material of this Summary ; make all the history up to this point seem a familiar and living unit.

#### SIXTH STEP: TEACHINGS.

1. It is the privilege of the poor in this world to make many rich, and having nothing, yet to possess all things, cf. 2 Cor. 6:10.
2. It is the duty of Christian workers to turn the thoughts of men away from themselves to Christ.
3. Guilt not seldom attaches to our ignorance.
4. Christians are inspired and protected at critical junctures.
5. There is a higher authority than human legislation, to which all men owe supreme allegiance.
6. Christ is the Savior—no other mediator of forgiveness has ever been known or suggested.

## STUDY VII.

SEC. 6. PROPERTY RELATIONS AND BENEFICENCE  
IN THE JERUSALEM CHURCH.

## Acts 4: 32—5: 11.

31-33 A. D.

JERUSALEM.

BIBLIOGRAPHY.—(1) Cambridge Bible on Acts, pp. 51-58; (2) Gloag's Comty. on Acts, I: 161-178. (3) Meyer's Comty. on Acts, pp. 69ff, 99-108. (4) Schaff's History of the Christian Church, I: § 114. (5) Expositor's Bible on Acts, I: 193-228. (6) Bible Dictionary, arts. Ananias and Sapphira, Barnabas, Burial, Community of Goods. (7) Neander's Planting and Training of the Christian Church, I: 24-28; II: 64. (8) *Vaughan's Church of the First Days*, pp. 101-112. (9) *Peloubet's Notes*, 1892, *in loc.* (10) *S. S. Times*, Feb. 10, 1883.

## FIRST STEP: FACTS.

PAR. 1. *v.* 32a, loving union of Christians. *v.* 32b, fraternity and beneficence. *v.* 33a, powerful witness-bearing. *v.* 33b, grace of the entire Church. *v.* 34a, all Christians provided for. *v.* 34b, unselfish contributions of the wealthy. *v.* 35, distribution to supply all need. *Vv.* 32-35, UNITY OF HEART AND COMMUNITY OF GOODS.

PAR. 2. *v.* 36, Barnabas, a Levite and Cyprian. *v.* 37, makes a notably generous donation. *Vv.* 36-37, BARNABAS' SACRIFICE.

PAR. 3. *v.* 5: 1, two Christians purpose a gift. *v.* 2, but selfishness vitiates it. *v.* 3, Peter charges them with hypocrisy. *v.* 4, their sin without palliation. *v.* 5a, divine judgment strikes Ananias dead. *v.* 5b, fear comes upon the witnesses. *v.* 6, his burial. *v.* 7, later appearance of Sapphira. *v.* 8, her complicity and falsehood. *v.* 9, a like judgment pronounced against her. *v.* 10, her death and burial. *v.* 11, awe over the entire community. *Vv.* 5: 1-11, SIN AND PUNISHMENT OF ANANIAS AND SAPPHIRA.

THE TRANSCRIPT. The following condensed paraphrase of this Section will give the idea of what is called for in the preparation of an original transcript (see Preliminary Suggestions, Topic 4: Record of Work; also Sec. 3, First Step, Remark.):

The Christians were one in heart, interest, and possessions. The Holy Spirit was with them in their ministry to unbelievers and to each other. A charity fund for the poorer brethren was provided by those who had more wealth. Particularly interesting was the generous contribution of Barnabas, whose home was in distant Cyprus. One sad instance marred this enthusiastic beneficence. Two members of the Church, who wished to appear as generous as the others, but were at heart wholly selfish, in hypocrisy offered a contribution. This sin struck so vitally at the integrity and purity of the infant Church that it called down divine judgment upon them. Under Peter's condemnation, first Ananias, and later his wife, were visited by sudden death. A deep feeling of awe came over the entire community at this solemn, severe meting out of divine justice for the purification of the Church from its unholy members.

(Study VII.)



SECOND STEP: EXPLANATIONS.

PAR. 1. *v.* 32, (a) one of the frequent short paragraphs descriptive of the condition of the Church, cf. Acts 2:42, 43-47; 4:23-31; 5:12-16; 12:24f; et al. (b) "*of one heart,*" etc.—*Hebraism meaning what, cf. 1 Chron. 12:38; Jer. 32:39; Rom. 15:5f; Phil. 2:2; 1 Pet. 3:8.* (c) "not one"—cf. the weaker expression of AV. *v.* 33, (a) "with great power"—in what ways manifest? (b) "witness"—recall the points concerning this made in preceding Sections (Acts 1:22; 2:32; 4:20; et al). (c) "*great grace*"—*what was its nature and how manifested, cf. 1 Cor. 15:10; Acts 5:13?* (d) "upon all"—whom? *v.* 34, (a) "*for*"—cf. AV. and state exactly the connection intended with *v.* 33b. (b) "lacked"—in what respects? (c) "sold"—the translation does not bring out the continued past action in the verbal form. *v.* 35, (a) "*laid them,*" etc.—*to be taken literally or figuratively? if the latter, explain the meaning, cf. Ps. 8:6 (see Hackett's Comty. in loc.).* (b) why was the money given to the apostles? (c) "distribution . . . need"—compare AV, stating the improvement made by RV.

PAR. 2. *v.* 36, (a) concrete instance of the community of goods. (b) why was Barnabas thus surnamed by the apostles, cf. Acts 11:23? (c) *why was the interpretation of the name added?* (d) ascertain the main facts about his later career, cf. Acts 11:22-25; 12:25; 13:1ff; 14:12sq; 15:35-39; Col. 4:10. (e) "*Levite*"—*why is the fact mentioned?* (f) locate and briefly describe Cyprus. (g) *is it to be understood that Barnabas was a resident of that island?* *v.* 37, (a) is there any information as to where Barnabas' field was, or the value of it? (b) *why is his gift so prominently recorded: because he was afterward eminent, or because the gift was unusually large, or because it involved a special sacrifice?*

PAR. 3. *v.* 5:1, (a) "but"—marks the sharp contrast between the two instances of charity cited, the first good, the second wicked. (b) "certain man"—how much is known about this man and his wife? (c) "*Ananias*"—*a common name, cf. Acts 9:10; 23:2; 24:1.* (d) what shows that they were members of the Christian community? (e) "a possession"—anything to indicate the nature of it, cf. Matt. 19:22? *v.* 2, (a) "kept back part"—though pretending to bring the entire amount? (b) meaning of "his wife being privy to it"? (c) "*certain part*"—*what proportion of the whole?* (d) "laid it"—hypocritically professing the same devotion as other givers? *v.* 3, (a) why is it Peter who addresses the men? (b) meaning of "Satan filled thy heart"—cf. Lk. 22:3; Jno. 8:44? (c) "to lie to"—cf. marg. rdg., better. (d) meaning of "lie to the Holy Ghost"? (e) *what relation did the deception sustain to the apostles?* (f) was Ananias responsible for this indwelling of Satan, cf. Jas. 4:7; 1 Pet. 5:8f? (g) "keep back"—fraudulent concealment? (h) *what was the source of Peter's knowledge of the deception?* *v.* 4, (a) "whiles . . . own"—meaning of the clause? (b) "after . . . power"—meaning? (c) "thou hast conceived"—Ananias himself responsible for it? (d) "conceived . . . heart"—deliberate purpose indicated? (e) "not lied unto men," etc.—cf. Ps. 51:4, and state the exact meaning of the words. *v.* 5, (a) *had Peter a knowledge of what was about to happen?* (b) what was Peter's relation to the death of Ananias? (c) what was the manner of that death (consider Neander's view)? (d) "*gave up the ghost*"—*meaning; why retained by the Revisers?* (e) "fear"—why? *v.* 6, (a) "young men"—were they regular (Study VII.)

Church officials, or only spectators? (b) *why was it they who performed this duty?* (c) "wrapped him round"—meaning? (d) "carried"—whither, outside the city? (e) "buried him"—why this haste? (f) *how could a legal investigation by the civil authorities into the circumstances of this death be avoided?* (g) describe the burial customs of the Orient? (h) *who were the witnesses of this tragedy—the whole assembled Church, or only Peter and some others?* v. 7, (a) "three hours"—after what? (b) *how could she be ignorant of that which had happened?* (c) "came in"—whither? (d) for what purpose? v. 8, (a) "*Peter answered*"—*in what sense were his words an answer?* (b) "tell me"—apostolic authority? (c) "ye"—who? (d) "for so much"—and no more? (e) *did he actually point to the money left by Ananias, or only name the amount?* (f) *why did not Sapphira grasp the situation?* (g) was Peter's question intended to appeal to her Christian conscience? (h) what did her absolute falsehood indicate as to her spiritual condition? v. 9, (a) "tempt the Spirit"—meaning? (b) "*the feet of them*"—*literally heard without, or spoken as a figure of instant judgment?* (c) "shall carry thee out"—in view of her complicity, and the punishment of Ananias, was Sapphira's fate plain to all? v. 10, *was the manner of her death the same as of her husband's?* v. 11, (a) "great fear"—cf. Acts 2:43. (b) what great lesson did this stern judgment teach the Christians? (c) "church"—the first time this word has been used to denote the Christian community, and why here (see Camb. Bible in loc.)? (d) "all that heard"—those who were outside the Church?

### THIRD STEP: TOPICS.

**1. The Social Life of the Christians.** (1) of how many members was the Church at this time composed? (2) discover (vv. 32f) four characteristics of the Christian community: (a) unity of spirit; (b) witness-bearing; (c) divine grace; (d) community of goods. (3) what reasons were there for this perfect accord? (4) in what ways was it manifest? (5) how did their fraternity appear in their property relations? (6) what was the burden of the apostolic teaching? (7) what influence had the Church upon outsiders? (8) in whose charge was the distribution of their charity? (9) what other arrangements earlier and later, cf. Acts 2:44f; 6:1-4? (10) who received aid from this source? (11) *what proportion of the Christians needed such assistance?* (12) *name some reasons for this poverty, cf. Jno. 9:22; 2 Thess. 2:2; 3:10ff.* (13) what was the spiritual and moral condition of the Church, as seen by contrast in the case of Ananias and Sapphira? (14) what indications that Peter was the leader of the Church? (15) were there as yet any regular officers in the Church? (16) what does the term "church" mean, as then applied to the Christian community?

**2. Property Relations in the Jerusalem Church.** (1) make a close, careful study of these verses: Acts 2:44f; 4:32, 34; 5:4. (2) what was the purpose of this beneficence? (3) *what kind of "possessions" were thus turned into charity?* (4) how general among the Jerusalem Christians was this disposition of property? (5) was it required of any one, or purely voluntary? (6) did those who contributed give all they had, or only such a portion as they saw fit? (7) what were the underlying causes of this communistic arrangement: (a) paternal beneficence toward needy brethren, cf. Matt. 22:39; Gal. 6:10; (b) the supposition that it was instituted and approved by

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Christ in the case of himself and his apostles, cf. Lk. 8:3; et al.; and which ought therefore to be continued in his Church. (c) the anticipation of Christ's speedy return, when earthly possessions would no longer be needed. (d) *what relation, if any, did this condition sustain to the similar feature of life among the Essenes (cf. Josephus' Bell. Jud. 2:8:3)?* (8) how long did the custom obtain in the Jerusalem Church? (9) *is there any further reference to it in the Acts and Epistles?* (10) was the custom put into practice anywhere else? (11) *if not, why not?* (12) state its points of success and failure as tried in the Jerusalem Church. (13) *was the later destitution of that church due to this experiment, in any measure?* (14) state the general principle involved in the Jerusalem communism—was it: (a) the abolition of private ownership in property, or (b) a readiness to share with those in want, as a result of which all property was held by the owner subject to draft on demand for that purpose? (15) *what related basis had the monastic life and the vow of poverty in the Roman Catholic Church?* (16) what is the principle of the Christian system regarding private property, cf. Matt. 19:21; Lk. 6:20; 12:33; Jas. 2:5; et al. (study carefully the interpretation)? (17) in view of this, what is the right attitude of the Christian Church to-day toward the social problems?

**3. The Sin of Ananias and Sapphira.** (1) who were they? (2) just what did they do, and with what result? (3) did their sin consist in the fact that they retained some of the money realized by their sale? (4) what did Peter tell them concerning their right to the money thus obtained? (5) did their sin lie in their hypocritical pretense that the amount turned over to the Church was the whole amount received? (6) what motives had they for making such a misrepresentation? (7) how prominent a motive was their desire to have a reputation for generosity and beneficence, such as characterized their fellow-Christians, while at heart they were supremely selfish? (8) *was it before or after the sale of the property that their selfishness gained the mastery?* (9) may their sin be exactly described as "a spurious imitation of exalted virtue"?

**4. Justification of the Divine Punishment.** (1) in the founding of a great institution, such as was the Christian Church, is it essential to have the principles of that institution absolutely recognized and established at the outset? (2) to secure this, what degree of resistance to enemies of the institution will be justifiable? (3) could any blow be more dangerous to the Christian Church than one aimed at the purity and sincerity of the moral and religious life of its members? (4) was the sin of Ananias and Sapphira anything less than this? (5) consider whether it was: (a) premeditated; (b) grossly corrupting; (c) from within the very body of believers; (d) essentially unchristian. (6) consider what sort of a punishment in this case would: (a) extirpate selfishness and hypocrisy from the Christian community; (b) exclude all who were not genuine Christians; (c) support the divine authority of the apostles in their forming of the Church. (7) was anything short of the punishment inflicted upon Ananias and Sapphira adequate to effect this? (8) did it in fact accomplish that for which it was sent? (9) when does divine justice necessarily replace divine love?

**5. Parallel Instances in Old Testament History.** *At the inauguration of new eras in the development of his Kingdom, God has seen fit to inflict the severest penalties upon transgressors, in order to protect his*  
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*Church. This judgment upon Ananias and Sapphira had its counterpart in the Old Testament history. Consider carefully five instances: (1) Gen. 4:1-15, the sentence passed upon Cain, for murder at the outset of the human race. (2) Lev. 10:1-7, the death by fire of Nadab and Abihu, for desecrating the holy worship of Israel newly instituted. (3) Num. 16:1-35, the engulfing of Korah and his confederates, for rebellion against Moses in his work of establishing the Jewish theocracy. (4) Josh. 7:1-26, the destruction of Achan and his house, for base covetousness at the very entrance into the promised land. (5) 2 Sam. 6:1-7, the sudden death of Uzzah, for desecrating the Ark at the time when the throne of David was established over Israel.*

#### FOURTH STEP: OBSERVATIONS.

1. The Christian community lived in unity of heart and practical fraternity.
2. The contributions to the charitable fund were voluntary, limited, local and temporary.
3. The communistic arrangement was due partly to the example of Christ, and partly to their expectancy of his immediate return.
4. The apostles were the overseers of the Church's charities.
5. Divine grace rested upon the Christians to guide and instruct them, and to give them influence over outsiders.
6. The Church had been threatened from without by persecution; it was now threatened from within by corruption.
7. The integrity and purity of the Church, remarkable as they were, had to be maintained at whatever cost.
8. Peter, the leader, was supernaturally endowed with the knowledge and wisdom necessary to deal with the case of Ananias and Sapphira.
9. The extreme punishment visited upon them was just, and only adequate to secure the well-being of the Church.
10. The divinity and the personality of the Holy Spirit are made plain in Peter's words.
11. It may be questioned whether there has been any reference to regular officials in the Church.
12. The first recorded shadow has fallen across the primitive Christian community.
13. The lesson taught by the calamity was wholesome both to Christians and to outsiders.

#### FIFTH STEP: SUMMARY.

1. Make a statement as to: (a) what you understand to have been the exact facts concerning property relations and beneficence in the primitive Christian Church; (b) what you believe, in view of this, should be the attitude of the Church toward present social problems.
2. Gather and classify all facts afforded by this Section which relate to the following topics:
  - (1) characteristics of the moral and religious life of the Christians.
  - (2) characteristics of the social life of the Christian community.
  - (3) the internal government of the Church.
  - (4) the relation of the Church to the multitudes without.
  - (5) God's dealings with his Church.

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3. Bring together all the information contributed by Sections 3, 4, 5 and 6 to these five topics, viewing and considering each topic through the entire history up to this point.

4. *Make a brief survey, in writing, of each of the five topics, which shall incorporate all the information so far obtained concerning it.*

SIXTH STEP: TEACHINGS.

1. True Christianity produces an essential unity of feeling, purpose and possession, among its adherents.

2. Extreme socialistic principles find no warrant in the community of goods of the primitive Church.

3. There is great responsibility in being members of the Church of Christ.

4. The desire to appear what we are not, to do what we do not do, to feel as we do not feel, is hypocrisy, against which Christ warned men in most solemn and awful language.

5. The integrity and purity of the Christian Church must be preserved ; when this cannot be effected by divine love, divine justice must assert itself.

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